

(c) Before a determination is made that a miner's disability has ceased, such miner shall be given notice and an opportunity to present evidence including that from medical sources of his own choosing and arguments and contention that his disability has not ceased.

§ 410.450 Death due to pneumoconiosis, including statutory presumption.

Benefits are provided under the Act to the eligible survivor of a coal miner who was entitled to benefits at the time of his death, or whose death is determined to have been due to pneumoconiosis. (For benefits to the eligible survivors of a miner who is determined to have been totally disabled due to pneumoconiosis at the time of his death, regardless of the cause of death, see §§ 410.410 through 410.430.) Except as otherwise provided in §§ 410.454 through 410.462, the claimant must submit the evidence necessary to establish that the miner's death was due to pneumoconiosis and that the pneumoconiosis arose out of employment in the Nation's coal mines.

§ 410.454 Determining the existence of pneumoconiosis, including statutory presumption—survivor's claim.

(a) *Medical findings.* A finding of the existence of pneumoconiosis as defined in § 410.110(o)(1) may be made under the provisions of § 410.428 by:

- (1) Chest roentgenogram; or
- (2) Biopsy; or
- (3) Autopsy.

(b) *Presumption relating to respiratory or pulmonary impairment—survivor's claim.* (1) Even though the existence of pneumoconiosis is not established as provided in paragraph (a) of this section, if other evidence demonstrates the existence of a chronic respiratory or pulmonary impairment from which the miner was totally disabled (see § 410.412) prior to his death, it will be presumed in the absence of evidence to the contrary (see paragraph (b)(2) of this section) that the death of the miner was due to pneumoconiosis.

(2) This presumption may be rebutted only if it is established that the miner did not have pneumoconiosis, or that his respiratory or pulmonary impair-

ment did not arise out of, or in connection with, employment in a coal mine.

(3) The provisions of this paragraph shall apply where a miner was employed for 15 or more years in one or more of the Nation's underground coal mines; in one or more of the Nation's other coal mines where the environmental conditions were substantially similar to those in an underground coal mine; or in any combination of both.

(4) However, where the evidence shows a work history reflecting many years of such coal mine employment (although less than 15) as well as a severe lung impairment, such evidence may be considered, in the exercise of sound judgment, to establish entitlement in such case: *Provided*, That a mere showing of a respiratory or pulmonary impairment shall not be sufficient to establish such entitlement.

(c) *Other relevant evidence.* Even though the existence of pneumoconiosis is not established as provided in paragraph (a) or (b) of this section, a finding of death due to pneumoconiosis may be made if other relevant evidence establishes the existence of a totally disabling chronic respiratory or pulmonary impairment, and that such impairment arose out of employment in a coal mine. As used in this paragraph, the term *other relevant evidence* includes medical tests such as blood gas studies, electrocardiogram, pulmonary function studies, or physical performance tests, and any medical history, evidence submitted by the miner's physician, his spouse's affidavits, and in the case of a deceased miner, other appropriate affidavits of persons with knowledge of the individual's physical condition, and other supportive materials. In any event, no claim for benefits under part B of title IV of the Act shall be denied solely on the basis of a negative chest roentgenogram (X-ray).

§ 410.456 Determining origin of pneumoconiosis, including statutory presumption—survivor's claim.

(a) If a miner was employed for 10 years or more in the Nation's coal mines, and suffered from pneumoconiosis, it will be presumed, in the absence of persuasive evidence to